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U. S. Department of Agriculture

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Wednesday, May 3, 1933.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "An Inexpensive Chop Suey Dinner." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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Somebody asked the other day what kind of meat to use in making chop suey. The specialists say that any mild-flavored meat is suitable. Pork, veal, chicken or rabbit are all good for this purpose. You can use left-over cooked beef successfully sometimes.

By the way, this question reminds me of something I've been intending to mention in our talks on economy meals. When you're planning low-cost menus, you'll often find that foreign dishes are helpful. Many of the most popular foreign dishes are low-cost dishes. For example, Hungarian goulash is an inexpensive stew, prepared and seasoned in a special way. Mexican chile con carne is another low-cost main dish. So is chop suey. Rumor has it that chop suey is not a pure Chinese dish; that it was invented by a Chinaman for American customers in San Francisco. Cooks in other lands learned long ago how to use inexpensive ingredients -- low-cost cuts of meat, common vegetables and so on, yet to combine and flavor them so that the dish turned out fit for a king. A friend of mine keeps a collection of good foreign dishes in her recipe file -- dishes she has tried out herself and enjoyed. She also has a file of foreign menus. When she wants something new and different to serve her family or her guests she plans a foreign meal -- a German supper, perhaps, or a Mexican luncheon or a Chinese dinner. Good foreign meals are ideal when you're having company. They can be both interesting and delicious, novel yet not expensive.

Suppose now that you're having your neighbors in to dinner tomorrow. And suppose you want a simple, thrifty menu for the occasion, a meal that is different, very good and doesn't cost too much. How about adapting a Chinese menu to your needs? How about starting the meal with a big steaming bowl of chop suey and along with it a big steaming bowl of white, fluffy, boiled rice. You can make your chop suey of chicken, rabbit or pork, whichever you please. Fortunately, you can use the more mature rabbits or chickens. Or you can use left-over meat.

Here's the menu: Chop suey with rice; then, Fried pineapple; Chinese tea; Crusty rolls; and, Lemon tarts for dessert. Of course, this isn't an exact duplicate of a meal that would be served in a Chinese home in Pekin or Canton. It is simply an adaptation for American use and taste.

I have here for you a recipe for rabbit or chicken chop suey. If you'll get out your pencil, I'll read you the ten ingredients:

1 rabbit or 2 or 3 cups of shredded cooked rabbit or chicken meat	2 cups of shredded celery
3 tablespoons of butter or other fat	2 cups of bean sprouts
2 cups of shredded onion	2 cups of broth
1 cup of shredded green pepper	2 teaspoons of cornstarch or flour
	1 cup of toasted almonds, and
	4 tablespoons of soy sauce.

That's a good long list. Let's go over it once again. (REPEAT)

If you have a rabbit to cook for this dish, here is the way you do it. Place the rabbit meat on a rack in a kettle. Barely cover it with hot water, add one-half teaspoon of salt, and partly cover the kettle. Simmer until the meat is tender -- or for about one and a half to two hours, for an older rabbit. Then let the meat cool in the broth. Drain and cut the meat from the bones in thin strips.

There's the meat ready. Now to make the chop suey. Melt the fat in a skillet. Add the onion and green pepper, also shredded. Long, thin strips of ingredients are characteristic of chop suey. Cook for a few minutes. Then add the meat and continue cooking, stirring frequently until it is slightly browned. Now add the celery, also shredded, and the bean sprouts, then the broth mixed with cornstarch or flour. Cover the mixture and cook gently for ten minutes. Then stir in the almonds, which have been broken in halves, and finally the soy sauce. Add salt if the dish needs it. The soy sauce contains so much salt that usually you won't need more. By the way, you can buy soy sauce in small bottles at most grocery stores.

You make pork chop suey in much the same way as you make rabbit or chicken chop suey. Many recipes call for sliced raw Jerusalem artichokes or radishes or sliced Brazil nuts instead of the toasted almonds.

Now about those fried pineapple slices. They are ideal accompaniments for rice and chop suey. They're easy to prepare, take only a few minutes, and are inexpensive, if you purchase your canned pineapple when prices are low. Many grocers are still offering bargains in canned foods. Well, for fried pineapple, drain the slices of canned pineapple and lay them carefully in a heavy skillet containing melted, hot butter or other fat. Brown the slices very slowly. Serve them hot on a large plate as part of the main course.

What's the secret of boiling rice so it will be white and fluffy with every grain standing separate from every other? The specialists say: Wash the rice carefully first, then drop it into boiling salted water and boil it gently for 20 minutes -- or until it is tender. You can tell whether it is tender by pressing a grain or two between your thumb and finger. After boiling, run cold water through the rice to wash off any starchy liquid. Drain the rice in a colander and place it over steam until the grains heat through. The big points in cooking rice are to have the water boiling when you put it in. And to boil gently until it is tender.

Thursday: "The Right Equipment for Canning at Home."

